

So there will be long days, but we will do our best to keep Senators advised after communicating with the leadership on both sides of the aisle what the schedule will be. I hope we can make good progress and complete this appropriations bill and move to another one later on this week or early next week.

MEASURES PLACED ON CALENDAR—H.R. 728, H.R. 1102, H.R. 1264, H.R. 2348, H.R. 3048, H.R. 3468, H.R. 4033, H.R. 4079, H.R. 4201, H.R. 4923, H.R. 4846, H.R. 4888, H.R. 4700, H.R. 4681, H.J. RES. 72

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I understand there are a number of bills at the desk due for their second reading. I ask unanimous consent that the bills be considered read a second time and placed on the calendar en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Mr. THOMAS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the senior Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. I thank the Chair.

LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to have a discussion as to where we are going in these remaining, I guess, less than 20 days we have before us. Certainly, we have a great deal to do, as the leader has pointed out. We have 13 appropriations bills and just 2 that have been passed. So we have the responsibility, probably first of all, to deal with that to keep the Government moving forward in doing the kinds of things we must do to ensure that programs in place now are funded.

There are a number of other things, of course, that will be talked about, a number of issues each of us, I suppose, have heard a great deal about when we were in our States. I come from a State in which nearly half the land belongs to the Federal Government. So you can imagine a good many of the things I heard about, and I am sure my partner in the Chair heard about, have to do with the public lands issue, the idea of access, multiple use.

We, of course, have had the great unfortunate experience during this time

of lots of forest fires, which, of course, have been very destructive. We need to take a long look at that, starting, of course, in commending the people who have worked so hard and risked so much to be able to control those fires and have done the very best job that could be done.

On the other hand, we have to take a look at the policy that has to do with the control and the management of resources, in this case particularly the management of forests. I submit to you there does need to be management; unless we want nature's way of reducing forests by fire, then we have to do it in some other ways that can be used. So I do hope we will have an opportunity there, of course, to not only take a look at the necessary funding that will be required in order to give the utmost protection to those activities, but also to seek to avoid this kind of repetition in the future.

We will be talking, of course, about normal trade relations with the People's Republic of China and additionally, shortly thereafter, WTO entry for Taiwan. I hope both of those things can happen, and happen shortly. We have postponed this activity for a very long time.

I think most people understand that if we are going to move forward in today's world, we are going to have to move forward to seek to make some changes in mainland China. The best way to do that is to have some rules laid out for them to be part of a world organization, such as the WTO, and begin to move forward to increase the number of changes that have, indeed, been made there.

I think that is very important. It is very important for our economy, but probably more so, it is important for the kinds of things we would like to have take place in China with regard to human rights, with regard to economic freedom, which are things we want to have happen today. So we will be moving forward certainly on that.

We will have an opportunity to take another look at tax reductions for the taxpayers of this country in a couple of areas that seem to me to be largely based on fairness. For example, the marriage penalty, it is really very difficult to understand how we can be opposed to making that fair. Two people who are single, if you combine their incomes, are at a certain level, but if they were married, with the same level of income, they would pay more income taxes. That does not seem to be right. Fairness ought to be one of the areas vital to taxation.

The same could be applied to the estate tax. As I suggested, our State of Wyoming has lots of small businesses, lots of farm and ranch families who have spent their lives—as did their predecessors—developing these kinds of assets. Under present law, when those assets are subject to the death tax, we find they have to sell those lands in order to make it work out.

Mr. President, I sense that you are about ready to rap the gavel, as you

should. I just end by saying I hope we can address ourselves to the issues that are out there and not put ourselves off creating issues rather than resolving them. It seems to me that is our challenge. We have the opportunity to do that in the next several weeks.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from North Dakota.

ISSUES BEFORE THE 106TH CONGRESS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my colleague, the Senator from Wyoming, said we have a lot to do. He is certainly correct, we have a lot to do in about a 5-week sprint to the end of this 106th Congress.

I think all of us aspired to come to this Chamber because we want to get things done for the American people. We want this country to be successful and to grow and prosper. We want to address real problems.

My hope is that we can find ways, between the political aisles, where Republicans and Democrats can agree that there are things that need to be done in this country and that we can do them together. I think that would be a refreshing thing for the American people to see.

In the final 5 or 6 weeks of this Congress, we could probably take some advice from the Robert Frost poem, "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening," where Robert Frost says:

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

We have miles to go before we put this 106th Congress to bed.

What are these issues that we must deal with before we finally adjourn this Congress?

A Patients' Bill of Rights. We have had so much discussion about the Patients' Bill of Rights in this Congress, and yet the Patients' Bill of Rights languishes in a conference. Month after month after month, nothing gets done. I know people have come to the floor of the Senate and have said: Gee, we are making progress. But I say the difference between this conference committee and a glacier is at least a glacier moves an inch or so every decade. This conference committee is not able to make progress on a Patients' Bill of Rights.

It seems to me, in the Senate and the House we must say to this conference: We want to have a real Patients' Bill of Rights brought to the floor of the Senate and the House and passed.

I have told stories in relation to this on the floor of the Senate. It is probably useful to recount at least one story again as an example of why we need a Patients' Bill of Rights.

A woman fell off a cliff in the Shendoah mountains. After having fallen off the cliff, she was rendered unconscious, with broken bones, with a concussion. Being unconscious, she was